

SHOWING STYRIA

Universalmuseum Joanneum
Mariahilferstraße 2-4 8020 Graz
www.steiermarkschau.at

presse@steiermarkschau.at
Telefon +43-664/8017-9214

SHOWING STYRIA 2023

Diversity of Life

House of Biodiversity and Path of Variety

We wish to thank our main sponsors Energie Steiermark, GRAWE – Grazer Wechselseitige Versicherung and Raiffeisen-Landesbank Steiermark

Probably the greatest challenge of our time is the change wrought on our planet through human intervention. The negative effects of this on the climate, on species and habitat diversity and thus on the foundation of our life is omnipresent these days. Correspondingly, SHOWING STYRIA 2023 deals with the themes of biodiversity and climate change under the title Diversity of Life.

Operated by the Universalmuseum Joanneum, the Herberstein Animal World is the ideal location of this year's SHOWING STYRIA on the theme of biodiversity. Moreover, the adjoining and unique Feistritzklamm/Herberstein European Nature Reserve offers the chance to integrate outdoor experiences of nature into the educational concept.

House of Biodiversity

The heritage-protected barn, 350 years old, in which previously parts of the Gironcoli Museum were accommodated, now houses the new House of Biodiversity. Actively engaging with the nature locations on the Path of Variety, visitors are offered an interactive exhibition on biological diversity. In a playful, participatory way, questions such as 'What is biodiversity?' and 'What importance does it have for us and is it in danger?' are discussed and answered.

Five main themes invite visitors to discover content in a way that evokes fascination and enthusiasm – and encourages them to get involved creatively. Connections are revealed by means of models, preparations and graphics. A stylised oak tree that lies right across the room points out the importance of old oaks in the Feistritzklamm/Herberstein nature reserve, serving the double function of exhibition furniture and room divider. The first area, with the inviting title 'Discover variety', introduces the theme with the aid of an over-sized model of a fake scorpion, an

aquarium and with search pictures, too. The second area offers answers to what makes biodiversity ‘naturally precious’. The scope ranges from hidden networks within eco-systems to the material value of coral reefs. The role of the human being within ecosystems and how he/she influences them – and to whom humans offer a habitat themselves – is explained in the area **‘You are part of the greater whole’**. **‘We set the course’** makes it clear that we humans design the landscape and thus either create – or destroy – habitats. In the fifth and final area of the exhibition, an interactive globe greets visitors: **‘My future, my planet’** – the one is connected indispensably with the other. The concept is envisioned to run over a longer period, far beyond 2023. The plan also encompasses maintaining constant observation of local biodiversity with the aid of scientific methods (biodiversity monitoring).

Nature locations on the Path of Variety

Very much in the spirit of an ecological network, the House of Biodiversity is linked with its immediate surroundings, the Herberstein Animal World and the adjoining protected area of Feistritzklamm/Herberstein. For this, along the Path of Variety, beginning with the Herberstein Relief in the entrance area to the Herberstein Animal World, several natural locations are staged, architecturally integrated into the landscape. The highlight is a platform built high above the Feistritzklamm with fascinating views of a species-rich, beautiful Styrian landscape. Reading stones and flower signs help visitors find their way along the path.

Herberstein relief

In front of the main entrance to the Herberstein Animal World, an abstract, three-dimensional, walk-in relief of the Feistritzklamm and its surroundings arouses one’s curiosity in the House of Biodiversity and the Path of Variety. All the nature locations, as well as distinctive places such as the castle, can be found here. This help in orientation reveals the highly varied structure of the region, formed and divided up by the River Feistritz.

Network forest

The focus here is on the complexity of a biological network. A ring-shaped installation made of 33 wooden steles serves to convey information. On the inner side, it shows a 360° hidden objects picture which visualises the biological connections and dependencies within a forest eco-system in the form of a brightly coloured collage. Adapted from the World Wide, a ‘Wood Wide Web’ is described with Fun Facts.

Arena of habitats

The most important domestic large-scale habitats are presented on the seating areas of the Arena, in particular their function, threats they face, and protection strategies for their preservation. The special architecture invites visitors to discuss

different points of view and positions. With its shaded location, the Arena also serves as a place of relaxation and may be used by groups in a playful capacity.

Panorama Feistritzklamm

Positioned on the ridge at one of the highest points on the grounds of the Herberstein Animal World, a viewing terrace and tower some six metres high offer a new view of the natural and cultural landscape of Herberstein. A view opens up over primal forest-like ancient oaks, mixed ravine and sloped forests as well as rocky dry grassland of the Feistritzklamm. These valuable structures can be precisely observed with one look through the adventure binoculars set up here.

Mobile research

Embedded in fantastic natural scenery at the foot of the Herberstein Castle Rock, between the free-flowing River Feistritz and the neighbouring pristine woods a mobile research facility is operated. This accommodates various simple instruments for investigating and observing biological diversity. Here it is planned that school classes, as well as other groups and individuals, will work under supervision in the form of workshops. Particular emphasis is on Citizen Science, meaning observation of nature by non-experts, whereby data gained in the region are presented and furthered processed in the House of Biodiversity.

Small nature locations

Complementary to the five major nature locations, four more places are there to convey to visitors ways in which each individual can contribute to promoting biodiversity by shaping their own environment. This concerns the cultivation of flower meadows, the creation of deadwood piles and 'insect hotels', as well as the use of native shrubs.

Nature protection project

A project has been started parallel to this featuring various measures and research. The project serves to improve individual habitats within the Feistritzklamm/Herberstein European Nature Reserve. Due to grazing with a herd of Blobe goats, an old domestic breed, an overgrown meadow slope near to the castle is transformed into species-rich pasture land. At several places, invasive, non-native shrubs are deliberately removed, thereby improving old oaks and promoting young oak trees. Scientific monitoring observes the degree of success in these measures designed to protect nature.